Stephen Reeves 9/13/10

Writing 105 Analysis

1. **What is the rhetorical context?**

Simi Linton wrote “Reassigning Meaning” to inform readers of the negative effects of the terminology used to describe the disabled. She writes this article because she believes that when society “reassigns meaning” to terms like disabled, disability, handicapped, it will have a strong sociopolitical impact. Linton strongly believes that when society disregards the medical meaning of disability and formulates a meaning that is positive towards people that have disabilities, that disability will go from a primary characteristic to a secondary characteristic. This text reinforces discussions in class and the video “Talk.”

1. **Who are the intended readers, and how does the writer address them?**

Simi Linton’s intended audience were members of the general public. When a member of the general public reads “Reassigning Meaning” they bring the general knowledge of how society treats disabled people. They also bring their own experiences of being around someone who was disabled and how they treated them. The writer and reader share the value of wanting to be kind and fair to everyone. In the article Linton say, “If we, as a society, place the onus on individuals with disabilities to work harder to ‘compensate’ for their disabilities or to ‘overcome’ their condition or the barriers in the environment, we have no need for civil rights legislation or affirmative actions”(Linton 229). This was a strong quote that appeals to the readers values. This is saying that everyone wants to be treated fairly and if not then they is no reason why certain groups only get an advantage.

1. **What is the subject matter of the text, and how is it arranged?**

Simi Linton provides argument to support her opinion that the medical definition of disability should in no way effect the sociopolitical definition of it. Linton provides the readers with facts and definitions to help support her argument. In the article she defines ableism and later compares ableism to racism and sexism (Linton 223). Linton’s arguments were reasonable and were not very extreme. In the article Linton refers to her involvement with the disabled community. This gives Linton credibility and it gives the sense that she is knowledgeable in this field of study. Linton skillfully uses outside sources to help convey her message, by defining terminology she helps the reader understand that some terms can be demeaning to people with disabilities.

1. **How does the author present the text?**

The text is structured by topic, for example: “Speaking about overcoming and passing”, “nice words”, and “nasty words”. The authors tone is serious and opinion oriented. The structure of the article allows for a lot of repetition. This was not always good, however, because it can lead to some confusion in the text. Linton would mention something in one topic and then again in another topic.

1. **Does the text succeed in accomplishing the author’s purpose?**

The text taught me about the troubles the disabled people go through because of the accepted medical definition of the word in society. The medical definition of disabled gives the impression to society that they are weak and cannot fend for themselves. Linton spoke of how society won’t fully accept the disabled because of the barriers put forth by the definition of the word. This article will teach others what it taught me. Linton backs the article up with substantial facts and examples. I think the text will fail to teach some about disabilities. Some people will think that there is no problem and that Linton is not looking at the other side of things. For example, Linton compares the not having proper handicap access is like having no civil rights legislation or affirmative action (Linton229). Some people may see this as a bit extreme, because African Americans suffered through more than 200 years of slavery. Those people fail to realize that the disabled are citizen of the United States and that the U.S needs to take care of them as they would member’s African American society.